

**City of Mountain View
Community Development Department**

**ZONING HANDBOOK
FOR THE
SINGLE-FAMILY HOMEOWNER
R1 ZONING DISTRICT**

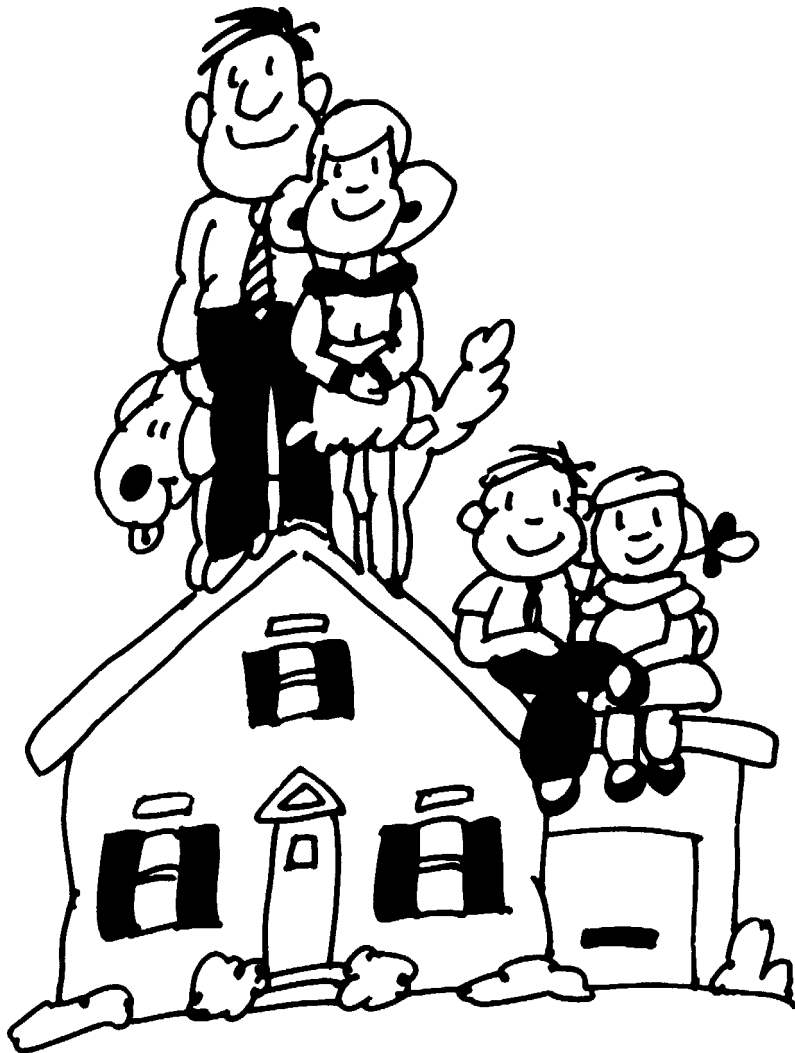


TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. USE OF THE BOOKLET

What Is the Purpose of This Booklet?.....	1
What Information Is in This Booklet?.....	1
Where Can I See the Mountain View Zoning Ordinance?.....	1
Who Can I Talk to for Help?.....	1

II. ZONING RULES

A. Uses of Property in the R1 District

What Uses Are Allowed by Right in an R1 District?	3
What Are Accessory Uses?	3
What Other Types of Uses Are Allowed in the R1 District?.....	3

B. Basic Development Regulations in the R1 District Property Lines

Where Are My Property Lines?.....	4
-----------------------------------	---

Corner Lots

Which Is My Front Yard if I Live on a Corner Lot?.....	5
--	---

Setbacks

What Are Setbacks?.....	5
How May I Determine My Setbacks?	5

Building Within Setbacks

Can I Build Anything in the Required Setback Area?	12
What About Architectural Projections within the Required Setback?	12
What About Adding onto My House Which Is Already Located in a Required Setback?	12

FAR

What Is Floor Area Ratio or FAR?	13
What Counts Toward FAR?.....	13

Height	
How High Can I Build?	14
Accessory Structures	
What Is an Accessory Structure?.....	15
Are There Any Special Requirements for Accessory Structures?	15
Parking	
How Much Parking Is Required?.....	15
Driveway Width	
How Wide Can I Build My Driveway?.....	15
Garage Width	
How Large a Garage Can I Build?	15
Front Yard Landscaping and Paving	
How Much of My Front Yard May Be Paved?.....	15
Fences	
What Height Is Allowed for Fences?	18
Nonconforming Structures	
What Are Nonconforming Structures?	19
What Are the Rules about Existing Nonconforming Structures?	19
What Are the Rules for Adding onto Nonconforming Structures?	19
Heritage Trees	
What Are Heritage Trees?.....	19
Street Trees	
What Are the Rules Regarding Street Trees in Front of My Property?	19
Streets and Sidewalks	
Who Is in Charge of the Street and Sidewalk Area in Front of My House?.....	20

III. ZONING REVIEW PROCESSES

A. Types of Zoning Permits

Overview of the Review Process	23
---	----

FAR Exception

What Are FAR Exceptions?.....	23
Who Decides Whether to Grant a Major FAR Exception?	23
Who Decides Whether to Grant a Minor Floor Area Exception?	23

Conditional Use Permit

Why Would I Need a Conditional Use Permit?.....	24
Who Grants Conditional Use Permits?	24

Variance

What Is a Variance?.....	24
Who Grants Variances?	24

Small Lots

What Are the Setback Requirements for Small Lots?	24
What Is the Allowable FAR for Small Lots?.....	24
Who Reviews Small-Lot Development?	24

Companion Units

Who Can Have a Companion Unit?	25
How Large a Lot Do I Need to Accommodate a Companion Unit?.....	25
How Large Can a Companion Unit Be?.....	25
Where Can a Companion Unit Be Located?.....	25
What Other Considerations Are There for Companion Units?.....	25
Who Reviews Companion Units?	25

B. The Development Review Committee (DRC) and Zoning Administrator Review Process

What Is the Purpose of DRC and Zoning Administrator Review in Single-Family Neighborhoods?.....	26
---	----

Tell Me About the Decision-Making Bodies—DRC, Zoning Administrator, Environmental Planning Commission and the City Council	26
--	----

DRC

How Does the DRC Review Process Work?.....	27
--	----

Zoning Administrator

How Does the Review Process Work with the Zoning Administrator? ..	27
What Happens at the Meetings and Public Hearings?	28

CEQA

What Is the State Law Regarding Evaluation of Environmental Impacts?	28
---	----

Review Time

How Much Time Does the DRC and Zoning Administrator Review Process Take?	28
---	----

Decision

What if I Disagree with the Decision Made by DRC or the Zoning Administrator?.....	28
---	----

Building Permits

Once the Community Development Department Approves the Project, When Can I Apply for a Building Permit?	29
--	----

The Review Process Flow Chart	29
--	-----------

I. USE OF THE BOOKLET

What Is the Purpose of This Booklet?

This guidebook has been prepared as an aid for homeowners in understanding zoning regulations pertaining to R1-zoned properties. It will help homeowners determine the allowable use of their property and assist in the planning of a residential construction project.

The City's intent in preparing this guidebook is to help make the rules understandable and to make the review process for special circumstances go smoothly.

The City believes strongly in taking a constructive approach as we provide information and review applications. We try to explain the intent of the regulations and help find workable solutions. In all cases, we seek to help homeowners find design schemes that meet their needs and at the same time respect the interests of their neighbors.

What Information Is In This Booklet?

This guidebook is divided into three sections:

- I. **Use of the Booklet** describes where to get information.
- II. **Zoning Rules** describes the ordinance criteria every construction project must meet.

III. Zoning Review Processes

describes the types of zoning permits required, the decision-making bodies and the review process.

The information contained in the guide may be found in the Mountain View Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 36—Zoning). This guidebook attempts to simplify these regulations into clear, everyday language. To locate the specific regulations in the Zoning Ordinance text, the ordinance section numbers have been included in this guidebook in parentheses at the end of the description.

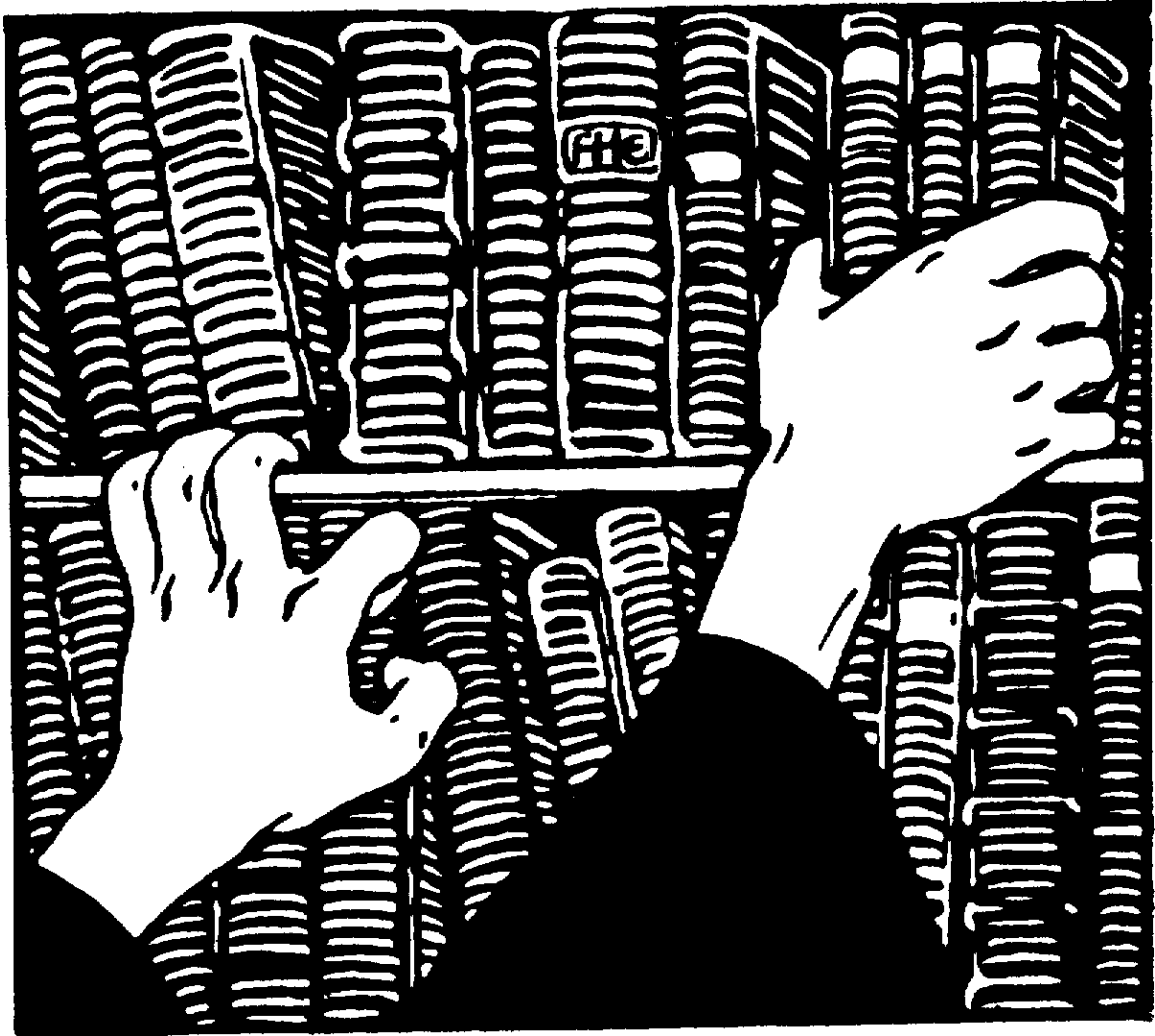
Where Can I See the Mountain View Zoning Ordinance?

The Mountain View Zoning Ordinance is available for purchase at the Development Services counter in the Community Development Department or may be viewed on-line at no cost at www.mountainview.gov.

Who Can I Talk to for Help?

If you have any questions concerning the information in this guidebook or with your specific project, you may contact the City of Mountain View Community Development Department by phone at (650) 903-6306 or by coming to the Development Services counter and asking to speak to the Planner on duty.

ZONING RULES



II. ZONING RULES

A. USES OF PROPERTY IN THE R1 DISTRICT

What Uses Are Allowed by Right in an R1 District?

The R1 District is intended for single-family residential dwellings. A dwelling is defined as a structure containing one kitchen and one or more rooms for living and sleeping purposes. By State law, small-family child-care homes (up to six children) and small licensed residential care homes (up to six residents) are also allowed by right in single-family dwellings. A complete list of all allowed uses can be found in Section A.36.12.020.

What Are Accessory Uses?

The following uses are automatically permitted as "accessory" uses:

- Rooming and boarding of not more than two persons.
- Home occupations.
(Section 36.42.100)

- Other accessory buildings/uses which are related to a single-family home such as parking, garages, storage sheds, etc.
(Section A36.12.040.G)

What Other Types of Uses Are Allowed in the R1 District?

The following uses may be permitted if a Conditional Use Permit is granted by the City and if appropriate licensing is obtained from the County or State, as necessary (Section A36.12.020):

- Child-care centers and large family child-care homes.
- Rooming and boarding houses.
- Churches or religious institutions.
- Schools or educational facilities.
- Public utility buildings.
- Public recreational facilities.
- Parking lots.
- Residential care homes (more than six unrelated persons).

B. BASIC DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS IN THE R1 DISTRICT

PROPERTY LINES

Where Are My Property Lines?

A look at your deed or the County Assessor's parcel map will provide you with your property dimensions. Parcel maps can be found on-line on the Santa Clara County Assessor's web site at <http://eservices.sccgov.org/ari/home.do>. If measurements between fences indicate a discrepancy between the known dimensions, you will need to hire a surveyor or engineer to determine your property lines. Generally, your fences are located on the side and rear property lines. However, over time, the location of reconstructed fences may not coincide with the underlying lot lines. Fences do not establish your legal property lines.

It is very important to note that your property line at the street is often not located at the back edge of the sidewalk. For the majority of lots, the City right-of-way extends 5' behind the sidewalk, which is typically the area that you landscape and consider part of your yard. In considering an addition, it is very important to find out where your front or side property is located. Check with the Public Works Department regarding the location of your property line relative to the City street right-of-way.

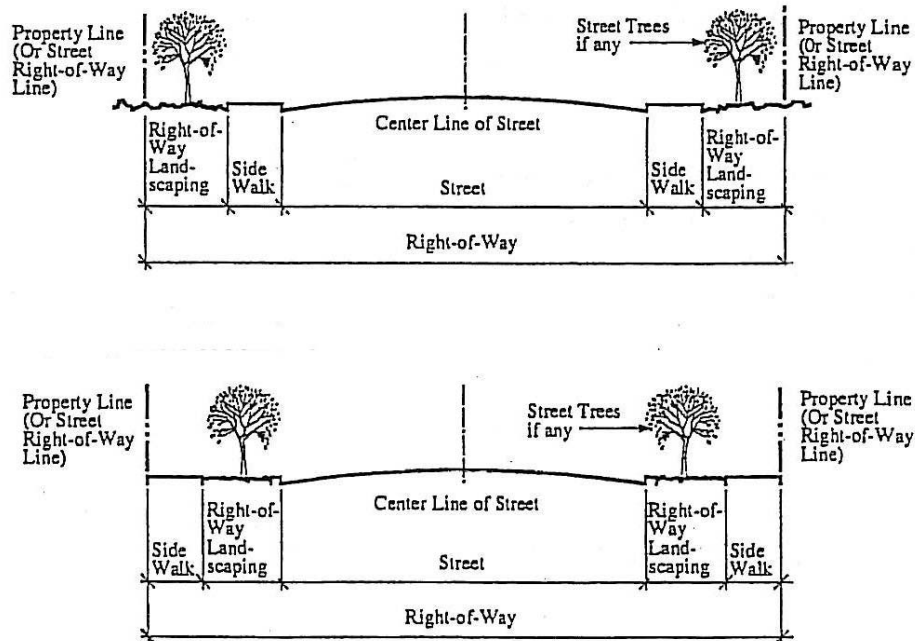


Figure 1

CORNER LOTS

Which Is My Front Yard if I Live on a Corner Lot?

For zoning purposes, the front yard is typically on the side of your home with the shortest street frontage unless, at the time of development, the longer frontage was designated by the owner/builder to be the front. If you are confused about your frontage, contact the Community Development Department.

SETBACKS

What Are Setbacks?

A setback is the open area between a property line and a structure. Required setbacks tell you how far from your property line a building must be located.

How May I Determine My Setbacks?

There are minimum setback requirements for the front yard, side yards and rear yard for all homes. The requirements are different for the first and second story as follows:

Setbacks for a Typical Lot 40' to 65' Wide:

For the first floor, the setback requirements are:

- Front yard setback is 20'.
- Side yard setbacks are 5' minimum on a side, 12' total adding both sides together.
- Rear yard setback is 20 percent of the lot depth or 15', whichever is greater.

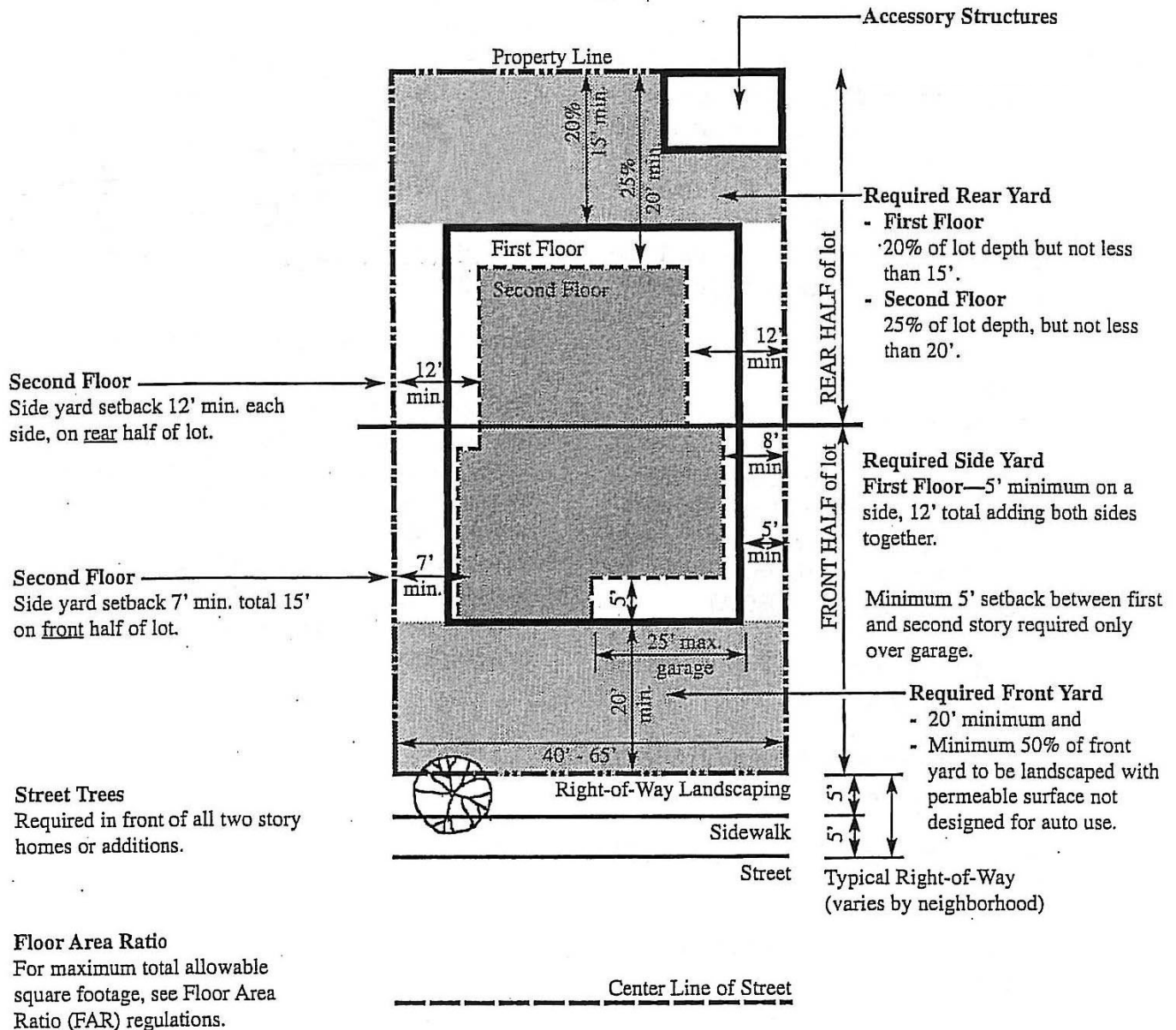
For the second floor, the setback requirements are:

- Front yard setback is 20'.
- Side yard setbacks are 7' minimum on a side, 15' total adding both sides together for the front half of the lot. The setback for the rear half of the lot is 12' for each side.
- Rear yard setback is 25 percent of the lot depth or 20', whichever is greater.

Second-story decks and balconies are limited to a total of 150 square feet and can only be located on the front and rear of houses and for corner lots, on the side yard facing the street. Second-story decks and balconies are subject to the second-story setbacks, except that when located on the rear of a house, an additional 5' setback is required.

The following are illustrations which depict the setback requirements for various lot sizes in Mountain View. Please refer to the lot with dimensions similar to your own.

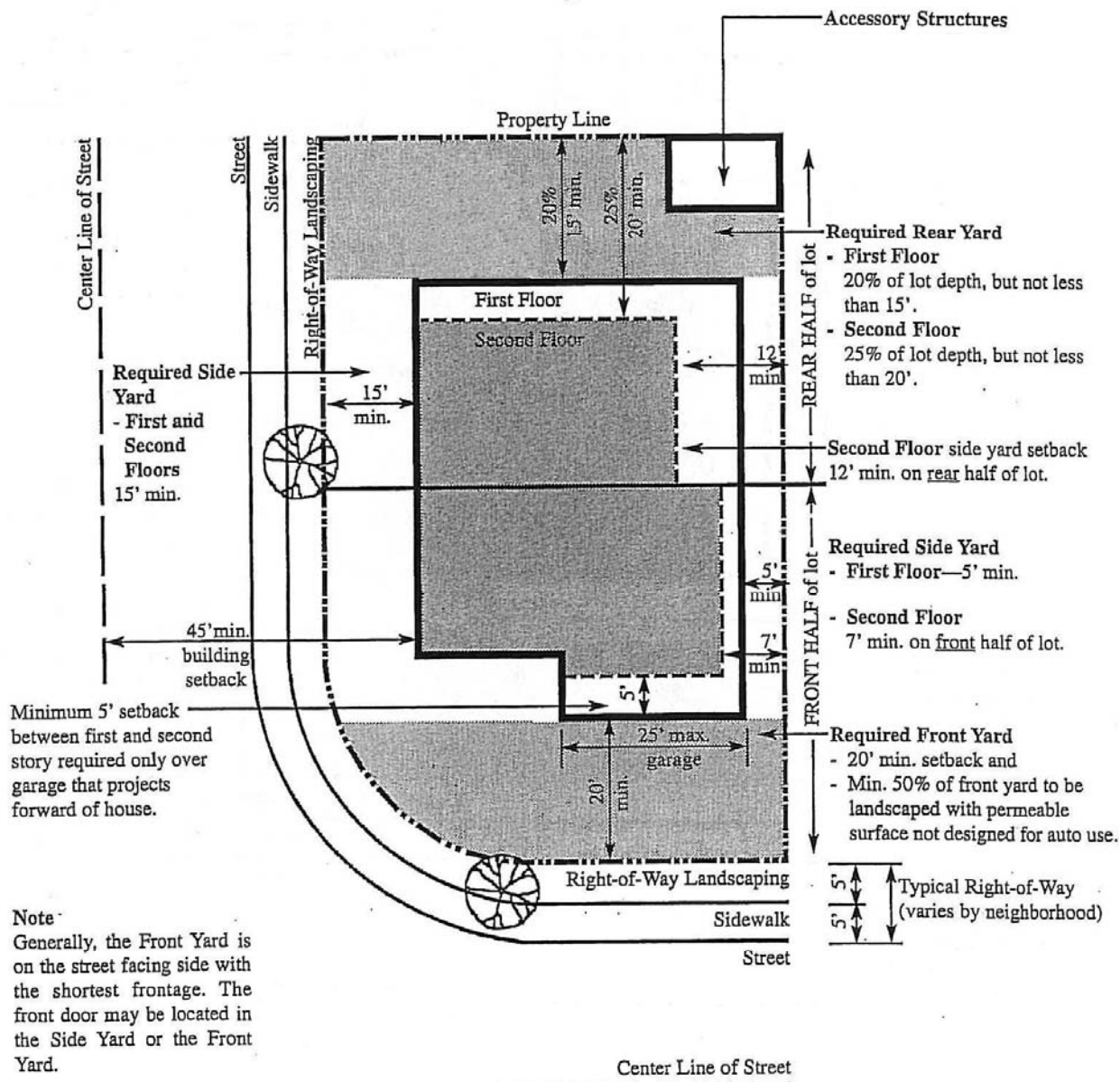
R1 District Lots 40' to 65' Wide: Setback Requirements



Setback requirements to be used in conjunction with the provisions of the R1 Zoning Ordinance and the Design Guidelines for Single-Family Homes

Figure 2

R1 District Corner Lots 40' to 65' Wide: Setback Requirements



Street Trees

Required in front of all two story homes or additions.

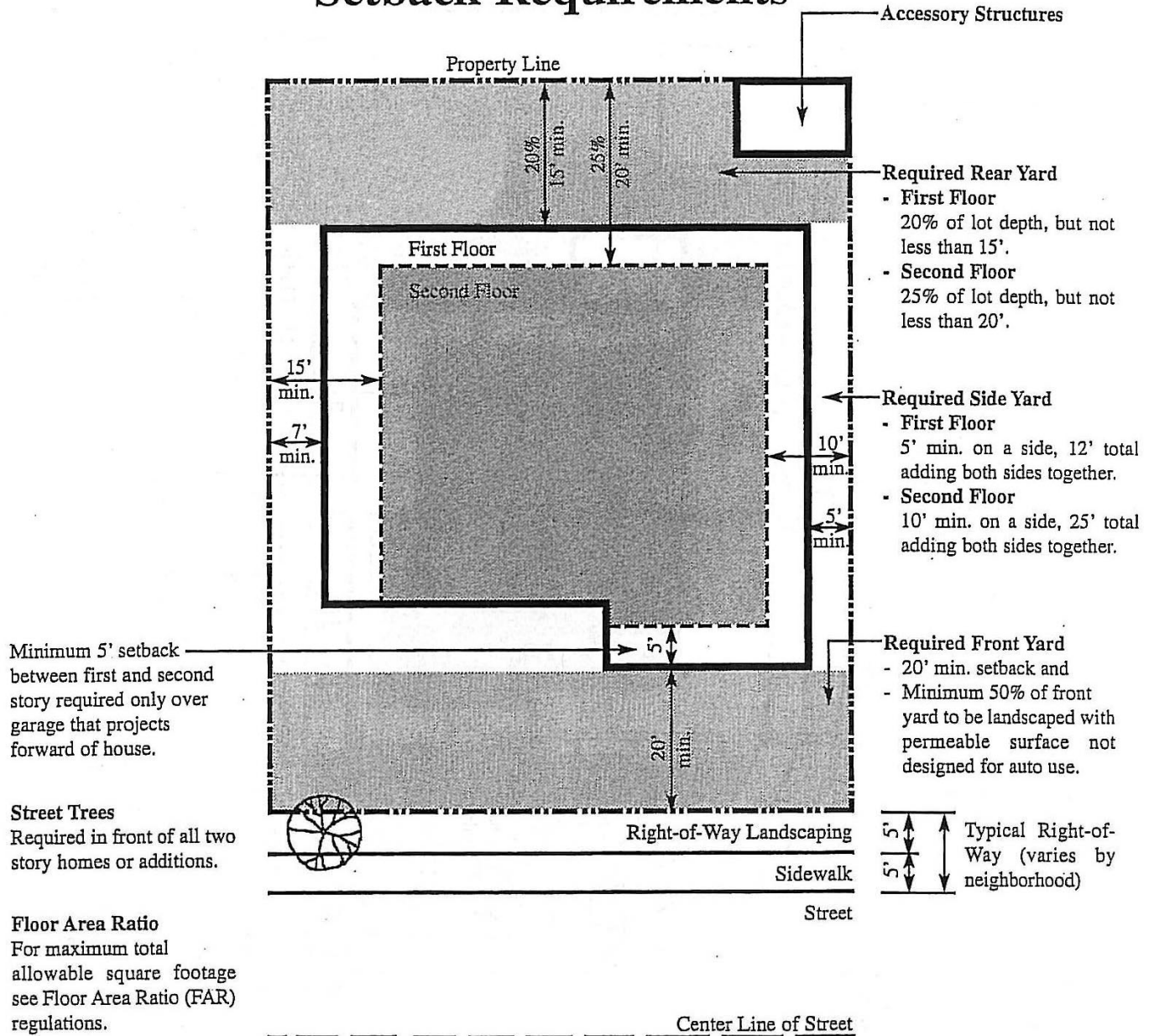
Floor Area Ratio

For maximum total allowable square footage see Floor Area Ratio (FAR) regulations.

Setback requirements to be used in conjunction with the provisions of the R1 Zoning Ordinance and the Design Guidelines for Single-Family Homes

Figure 3

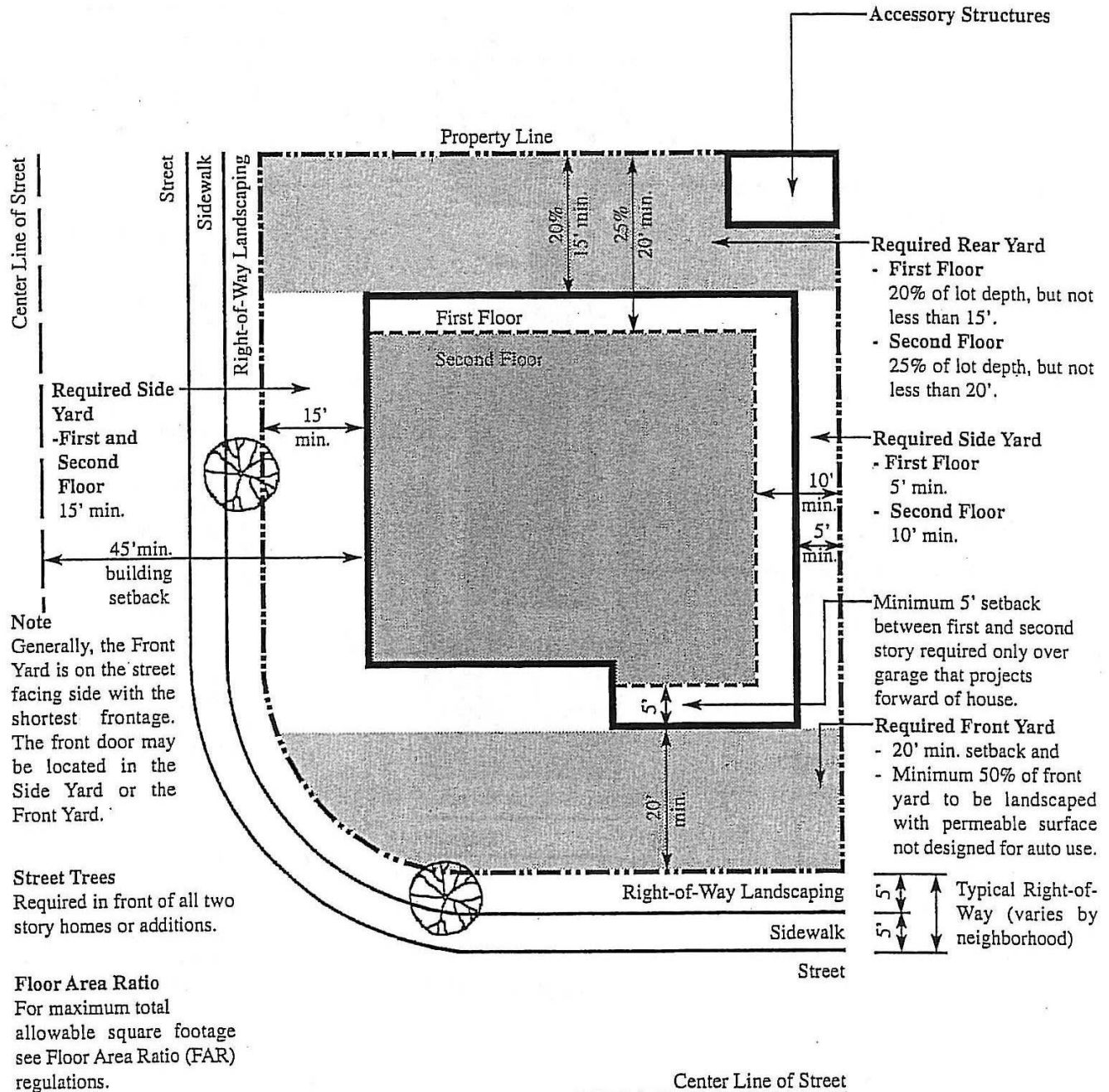
R1 District Lots Greater than 65' Wide: Setback Requirements



Setback requirements to be used in conjunction with the provisions of the R1 Zoning Ordinance and the Design Guidelines for Single-Family Homes

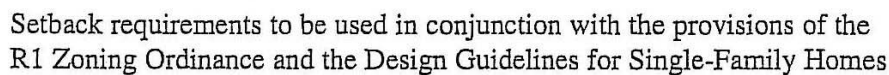
Figure 4

R1 District Corner Lots Greater than 65' Wide: Setback Requirements



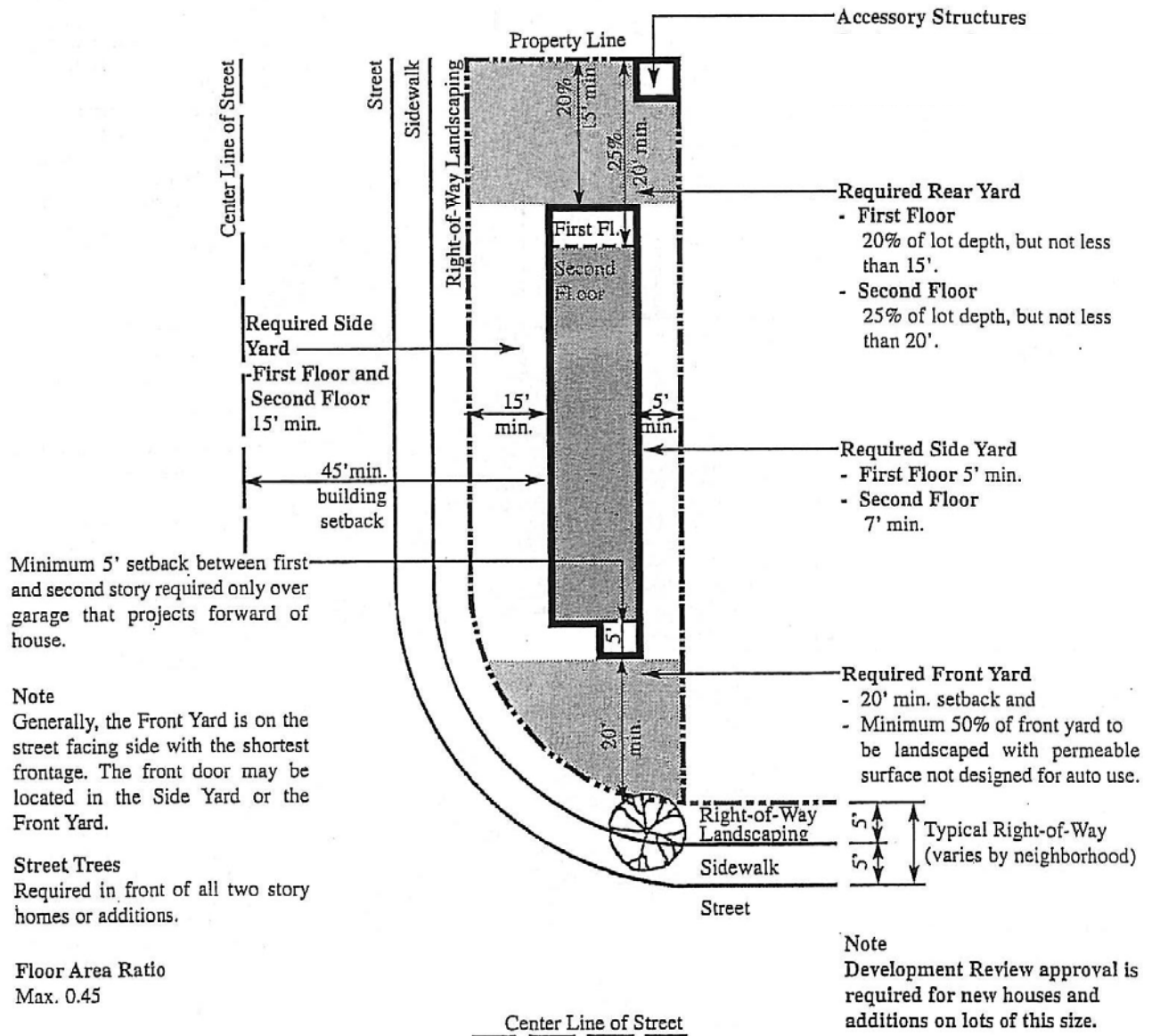
Setback requirements to be used in conjunction with the provisions of the R1 Zoning Ordinance and the Design Guidelines for Single-Family Homes

Figure 5



-10-

R1 District Corner Lots Less than 40' Wide or Less than 5000 s.f: Setback Requirements



Setback requirements to be used in conjunction with the provisions of the R1 Zoning Ordinance and the Design Guidelines for Single-Family Homes

Figure 7

BUILDING WITHIN SETBACKS

Can I Build Anything in the Required Setback Area?

A homeowner can propose an addition to a home that extends into the required rear yard setback area if it is only one story high and is consistent with the design of the main building. The projection must be at least 10' from the rear property line and cannot cover more than 12.5 percent of the required rear yard. This is an exception to the normal development standards and requires design review and approval of a Development Review Permit. (Section A36.12.040.I.1.a.2)

Accessory structures detached from the principal structure are allowed to be built in the required setback area, subject to specific regulations. See the "Accessory Structures" section of this booklet for further information.

What About Architectural Projections within the Required Setback?

Decks, stoops, landings, concrete patios and driveways that are less than eighteen inches (18") in height above natural grade may encroach into any side or rear yard, provided the structure causes no drainage onto adjacent properties. (Section A36.12.040.I.2)

Architectural features attached to the principal or accessory structures which are greater than eighteen inches (18") in height above grade (e.g., eaves, brackets, canopies, trellises, arbors, open porches, patio covers, awnings and chimneys)

and first-floor bay windows (no more than 12' in length), may also project as follows:

- 2' into the side yard setback.
 - 6' into the front yard setback.
 - 6' into the rear yard setback.
- (Section A36.12.040.I.3)

What About Adding onto My House Which Is Already Located in a Required Setback?

Any building, or portion of a building, which is located within a required setback is called "nonconforming." The Zoning Ordinance allows these buildings to remain for their normal structural life. However, any addition to a nonconforming building must follow the current development regulations. (Section 36.29.3)

FAR

What Is Floor Area Ratio or FAR?

Every single-family residential property is limited to a maximum amount of square footage or floor area. The ratio used to determine allowable square footage is known as the Floor Area Ratio or FAR.

The FAR is a measurement for limiting the bulk and mass of structures. The measurement is expressed as a ratio of the house size to the lot size. The number is calculated by dividing the total square footage of all structures on the property by the total square footage of the property. In other words, the size of the house is divided by the size of the lot in order to determine the FAR.

Mountain View has a sliding-scale FAR based on your exact lot size. Refer to the following table to see your allowable FAR:

FAR Table

Lot Size	FAR
< 5,000 sf	.45
5,000 sf	.45
6,000 sf	.44
7,000 sf	.43
8,000 sf	.42
9,000 sf	.41
>10,000 sf	.40

For lot sizes in between those listed above, the floor area is calculated to three decimal places. For example, the allowable FAR for a 6,500 square foot lot is 0.435. To calculate the FAR for your

particular lot, you may apply the following formula:

$$\text{FAR} = .50 - (.00001 \times \text{Lot Area})$$

What Counts Toward FAR?

Floor area shall include the following: all floor area enclosed within the walls of the structure (measured from the outside perimeter of the walls); the total floor area of all accessory structures, including garages, carports, sheds; and any other fully enclosed space that contributes toward the overall mass or bulk of the building.

The total area of each floor, as defined by the area enclosed by the exterior walls, will be calculated separately. Openings for stairways or shafts are not deducted.

Any basement level where more than one-half of the height is above grade constitutes a story and counts as floor area.

If proposed or existing space is under a sloping roof, any area where the wall height is 5' or greater is counted as floor area. (See Figure 8.)

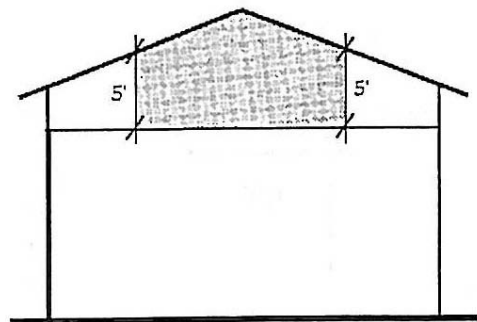


Figure 8

HEIGHT

How High Can I Build?

The maximum height for a one-story home is 24' with a maximum first-floor plate height of 15'. The maximum height for a two-story home is 28' with a maximum second-floor plate height of 22'. (See Figure 9.)

The maximum building height is measured as the vertical distance from the elevation of the top of the existing or planned curb along the front property line to:

- The highest point of the coping of a flat roof;
- The top of the slope of a mansard roof;
- The ridge for a gable, hip or gambrel roof, excluding chimneys or vents. (See Figure 10.)

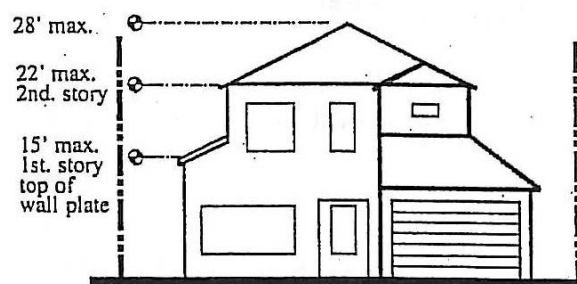


Figure 9

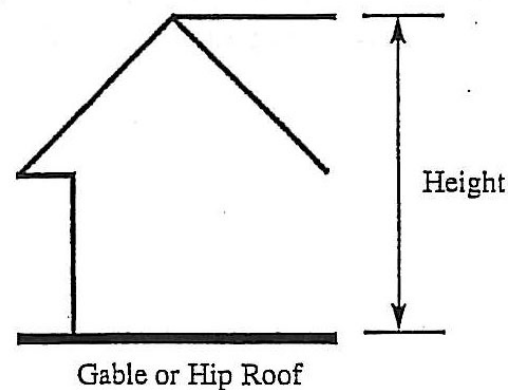
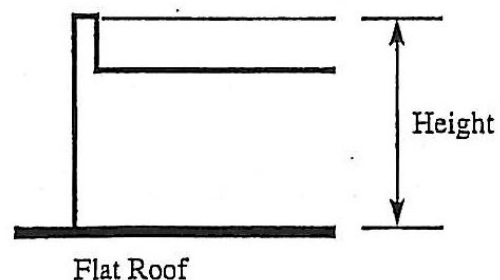
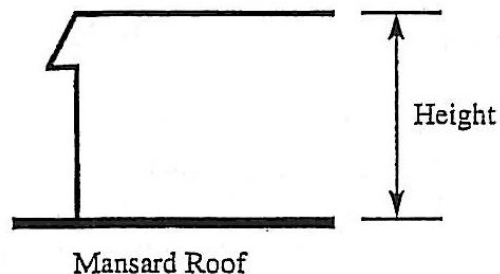


Figure 10

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

What Is an Accessory Structure?

Accessory structures are buildings that are detached and subordinate to the main house. Examples of accessory structures are: gazebos, greenhouses, storage buildings, enclosures for pool equipment, detached carports and detached garages. All accessory structures are counted toward the total FAR for your lot.

Are There Any Special Requirements for Accessory Structures?

There are two classifications of accessory structures: small and large. See Section A36.12.040.G. for specific standards and Figures 11 and 12.

PARKING

How Much Parking Is Required?

Two parking spaces are required for each home, one of which must be covered. Parking may be covered by either a garage or a carport. A minimum unobstructed inside dimension of 9' x 20' must be provided for a garage or carport. Any time you are proposing a building addition on a property which currently does not meet the covered parking requirement, you are required to provide the covered parking.

DRIVEWAY WIDTH

How Wide Can I Build My Driveway?

The minimum driveway width is 9'. Lots with one-car garages are allowed a maximum 20' wide driveway in the area

visible from the street for vehicle parking. Lots with two- or three-car garages are allowed a maximum 30' wide driveway in the area visible from the street for vehicle parking. (Section A36.12.030.A.6)

GARAGE WIDTH

How Large a Garage Can I Build?

For lots less than 75' wide, a garage which faces the street may not exceed 25' in width. On lots that are more than 75' wide, the garage facade may be up to 35' wide.

FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING AND PAVING

How Much of My Front Yard May Be Paved?

At least 50 percent of the area of your required front yard area must be landscaped; therefore, no more than 50 percent of the front yard may be paved. (Section A36.12.030.A)

Requirements for Small Accessory Structure

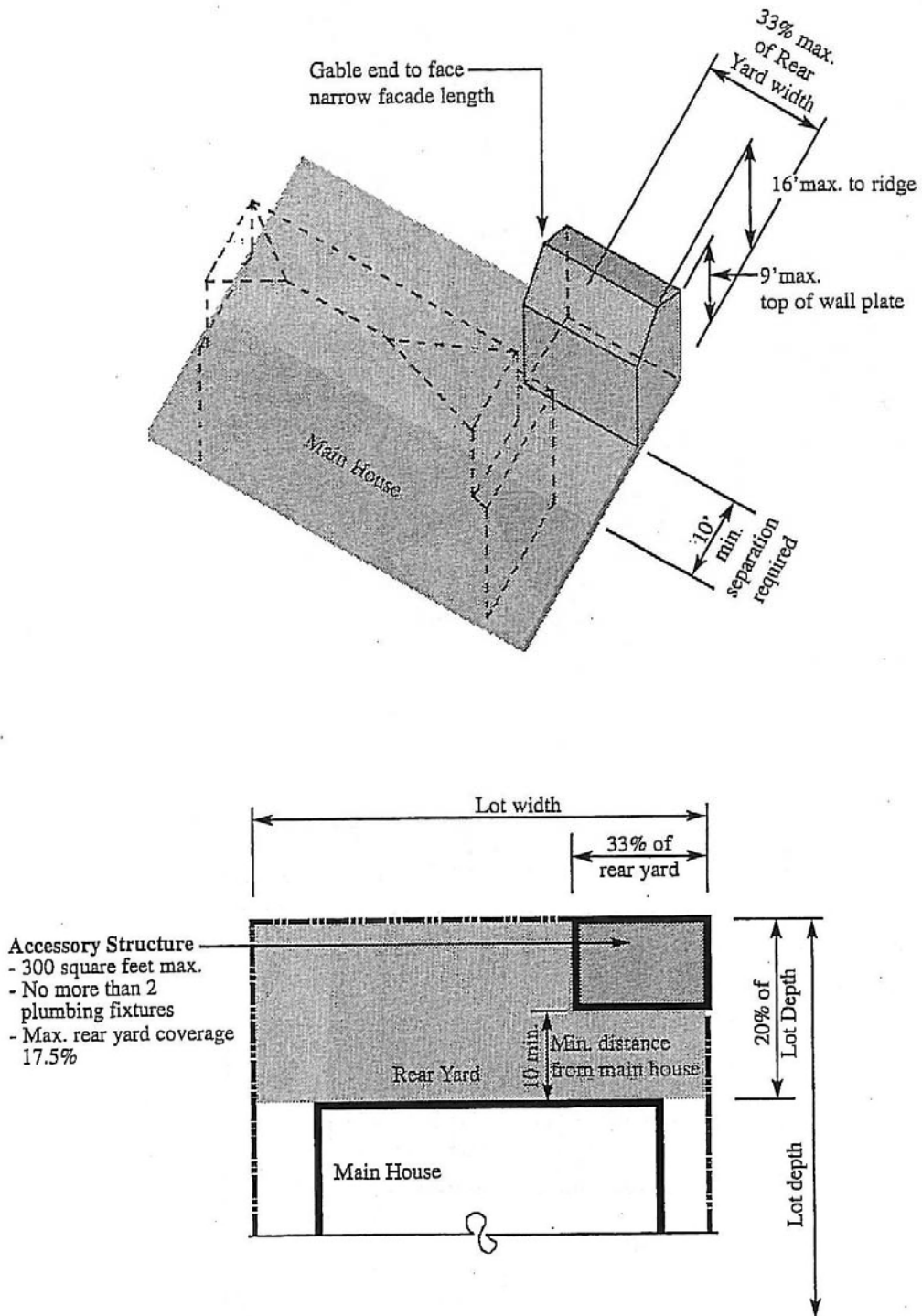


Figure 11

Requirements for Large Accessory Structure

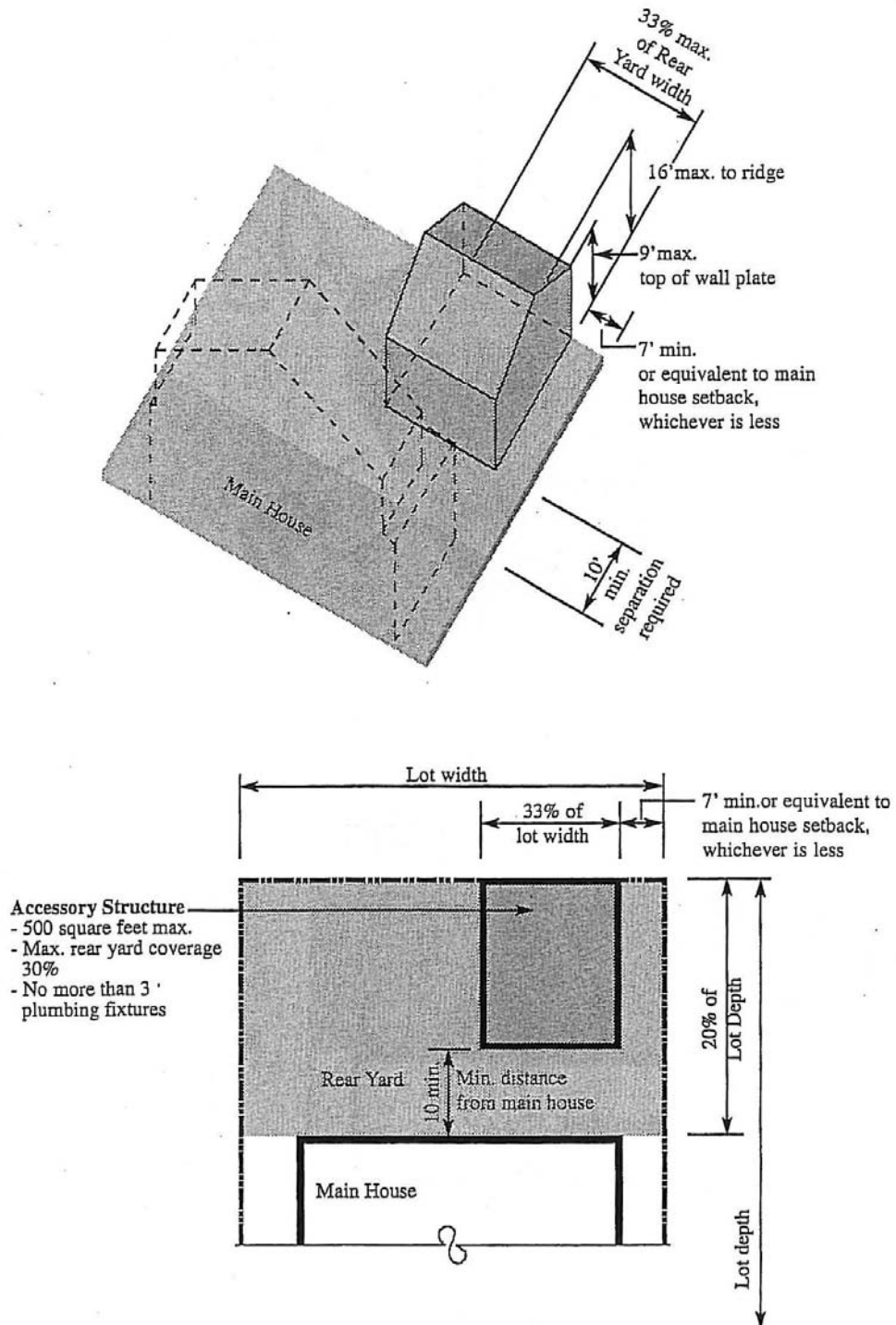


Figure 12

FENCES

What Height Is Allowed for Fences?

Side yard and rear yard fences can be a maximum height of 6'. You may apply for a Development Review Permit to increase the height up to 7'. For fences within the front yard setback, the maximum height is 3'. Open-latticed trellises and arbors used as entry features are allowed in the front yard setback and are limited to 8' in height, 5' in width and 3' in depth. (Section A36.10.030.D.3 and Figure 13)

For corner lots, any fence within 35' of the intersection (measured from the property or street right-of-way line) is limited to a maximum height of 3' for safe visibility.

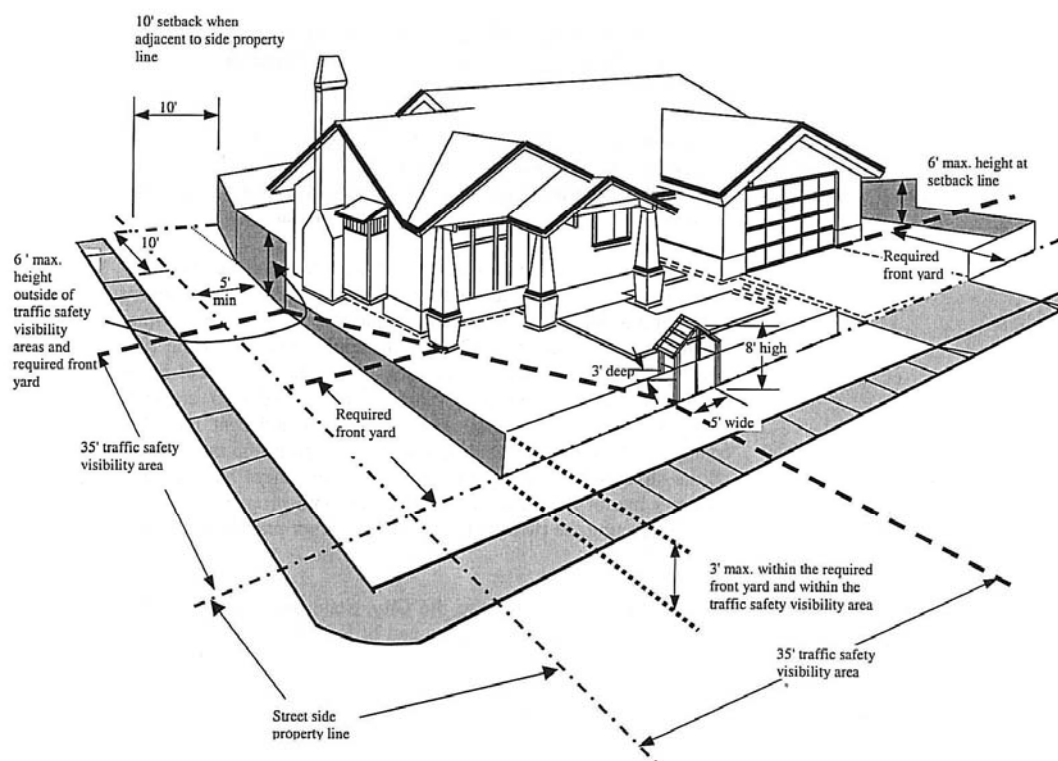


Figure 13

NONCONFORMING STRUCTURES

What Are Nonconforming Structures?

A nonconforming structure is one which does not meet the current requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, but which was legal at the time it was built.

What Are the Rules about Existing Nonconforming Structures?

As long as the structure was legal at the time it was built, meaning that it conformed to the codes at that time and was built with required permits, it may remain for the structural life of the building. If the structure was built without proper permits, the structure would need to be approved retroactively in order to be a legal nonconforming structure.

What Are the Rules for Adding onto Nonconforming Structures?

Additions to nonconforming structures are permitted as long as the addition portion meets all current zoning requirements. However, if the house is being expanded to more than twice its original size, the entire structure must be brought into conformance with current zoning standards.
(Section 36.29.3.i)

HERITAGE TREES

What Are Heritage Trees?

A Heritage tree is defined as any tree which is greater than 48" in circumference when measured 54" above the ground. Also, for oaks, redwoods and cedar trees, the minimum circumference to be considered a Heritage tree is 12". The City Code states that because these trees enhance the scenic beauty of the City and protect property values, they may only be removed under certain conditions and with a City permit.

If removal of a tree is due to a building addition that requires a planning development permit, a Heritage Tree Removal Permit is required to be reviewed and approved by the Community Development Department. If removal is not in conjunction with a planning development permit, removal is reviewed and approved by the Community Services Department.

STREET TREES

What Are the Rules Regarding Street Trees in Front of My Property?

Street trees are the City-designated trees in the public right-of-way. They are either located in a planter strip next to the curb or in the landscaped area between the sidewalk and the front property line of a private property.

The Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division of the Community Services Department is in charge of all existing City street trees, including their maintenance. However, the property

owner is responsible for watering street trees.

If you would like to have a City street tree removed from the front of your property, you need a permit from the Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division. Removal is strongly discouraged unless a tree is badly diseased or poses a safety threat or other type of problem.

If you desire to add street trees in front of your property, contact the Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division at (650) 903-6273 or the Public Works Department at (650) 903-6311.

If you are constructing a new residence or a new second story, you are required to plant street trees on your property if they do not currently exist or if they do not currently meet City specifications for tree spacing or if the existing street trees are diseased or dying. The Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division of the Community Services Department will determine the appropriate spacing and species for your neighborhood.

STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Who Is in Charge of the Street and Sidewalk Area in Front of My House?

The Public Works Department oversees any issues related to the street area in front of your house. This area may be City-owned, or it may have been dedicated to and accepted by the City for street purposes, and is called the public right-of-way. It includes street paving, street trees, curbs, gutters, sidewalks

and streetlights as well as utility lines under the street pavement.

Permits from the Public Works Department are required anytime a property owner wishes to do work in the right-of-way, including widening a driveway, planting street trees, repairing sidewalks, etc. The Public Works Department also requires permits for private structures such as fences that encroach into the public right-of-way.



III. ZONING REVIEW PROCESSES

A. TYPES OF ZONING PERMITS

OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

There are two categories of permits for single-family homes:

- Building permits, which involve checking for compliance with all applicable zoning and building codes.
- Planning permits, which involve discretionary review of design.

Building permits are needed for all remodels, additions and new construction associated with your home. A separate planning permit is usually not required for new homes and additions that meet the basic zoning requirements of the R1 District.

A planning permit may be required for the various types of zoning exceptions for special circumstances and special permits. Homeowners are encouraged to meet with a planner to discuss a proposal before submitting an application. Planners can often help find solutions, offer feedback and give information which will make the process easier.

Mountain View is a city committed to enhancing its image, its livability and its sense of community, but not at the expense or hardship of its property owners. City staff and the reviewing

bodies work with the property owner to find solutions that work both for the property owner and the neighbors.

FAR EXCEPTION

What Are FAR Exceptions?

Within the R1 District, it is possible to receive a Major or Minor FAR Exception provided your project meets specific criteria concerning your unique circumstances. See Section A36.12.030.A.4 for specific requirements.

Who Decides Whether to Grant a Major FAR Exception?

The Zoning Administrator decides whether to grant Major FAR Exceptions (up to 10 percent increase over the base floor area). The Zoning Administrator refers all of these applications to DRC for an evaluation of the site planning and architectural issues prior to the public hearing.

Who Decides Whether to Grant a Minor Floor Area Exception?

The DRC decides whether to grant a Minor FAR Exception (up to 75 square feet over the base floor area).

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Why Would I Need a Conditional Use Permit?

A Conditional Use Permit is required if the R1 property will be used for anything other than single-family dwellings or permitted accessory uses. For example, a Conditional Use Permit is required in order to allow a church to locate in the R1 District.

Who Grants Conditional Use Permits?

The Zoning Administrator decides whether to grant Conditional Use Permits at a public hearing.

VARIANCE

What Is a Variance?

Variances allow exceptions from the development standards because of extraordinary circumstances applicable to the property (such as size, shape, topography, location) and when the strict application of the development standards would deny the property owner privileges enjoyed by the other property owners in the same zoning district. An application for a variance must be submitted and a public hearing held. In order to grant a variance, the City must be able to make all six findings stated in Section A36.56.050. The property owner shall bear the burden of proving to the City that all six findings can be made.

Who Grants Variances?

The Zoning Administrator decides whether to grant a variance. The

Zoning Administrator often refers variance applications to DRC for an evaluation of the site planning and architectural issues.

SMALL LOTS

Mountain View has several neighborhoods with lots of very small size, or very narrow width, giving an unusual character to those neighborhoods. For lots less than 5,000 square feet in area, or less than 40' wide, there are special zoning regulations. The design guidelines for single-family homes provide recommendations specific to small lots. Any addition or new construction must demonstrate substantial compliance with these recommendations. In addition, there are zoning regulations which pertain to small lots.

What Are the Setback Requirements for Small Lots?

Refer to the illustrated setback requirements in Section II for setback requirements specific to small lots.

What Is the Allowable FAR for Small Lots?

The FAR for small lots is 0.45.

Who Reviews Small-Lot Development?

The DRC reviews additions and new construction on small lots for consistency with the Zoning Ordinance and the Design Guidelines for Single-Family Homes.

COMPANION UNITS

Who Can Have a Companion Unit?

Companion units are allowed on all R1 lots provided they meet the development regulations for companion units in Section A36.12.040.B.

How Large a Lot Do I Need to Accommodate a Companion Unit?

Your lot must be at least 35 percent larger than the minimum lot size required by your zoning district.

How Large Can a Companion Unit Be?

The companion unit is limited to 700 square feet with an additional 200 square feet allowed for a covered parking space.

Where Can a Companion Unit Be Located?

Companion units can be a detached unit, attached to the main house at ground level or be on the second story above an attached or detached garage. If the companion unit is detached, it must be separated from the main house by at least 10', be located on the rear half of the lot and be a minimum of 10' from the rear property line. The companion unit, together with any other structures on the lot, may not cover more than 30 percent of the required rear yard. If the companion unit is connected to the house or garage, it must be within the standard setbacks of the principal structure.

What Other Considerations Are There for Companion Units?

The design of the unit should be consistent with the design of the main building and sympathetic to the sunlight and privacy of the surrounding neighbors. At least one parking space shall be provided for each bedroom in the companion unit in addition to the two required for the main building. The location of the parking spaces should minimize disruption to neighbors and to the neighborhood character.

Who Reviews Companion Units?

A building permit is required for the construction of a new companion unit. A planner will review the plans for compliance with all the development regulations.

B. THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) AND ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REVIEW PROCESS

What Is the Purpose of DRC and Zoning Administrator Review in Single-Family Neighborhoods?

The DRC and Zoning Administrator review are only required for single-family homes when the homeowner requests some type of exception from standard zoning rules. In these cases, the review bodies evaluate:

- The magnitude and design quality of the request;
- Its impact on adjacent homeowners; and
- Its impact on neighborhood character.

Most importantly, the reviewing bodies must consider the specific criteria established in the Zoning Ordinance for each type of exception. In making a decision, the reviewing body seeks to balance the needs and desires of the individual homeowner with the rights and interests of neighbors. The reviewing body also seeks to ensure a minimum level of design quality in order to protect the stability of property values.

Tell Me About the Decision-Making Bodies—DRC, Zoning Administrator, Environmental Planning Commission and the City Council.

The DRC is chaired by the Deputy Zoning Administrator and two or three consulting professional architects who

advise the Deputy Zoning Administrator.

The Zoning Administrator functions as the judicial administrator to hold public hearings and review development projects. The Zoning Administrator is empowered to make the final decision on variances and conditional use permits, makes recommendations on projects that go to the City Council for the final decisions such as planned unit developments with four or more units and projects in planned districts. The Zoning Administrator also decides questions and interpretations related to the Zoning Ordinance.

The Environmental Planning Commission has the task of reviewing all planning policy issues, including precise plans, rezoning applications, Zoning Ordinance changes and the General Plan, but it does not review individual development projects.

The City Council is a seven-member body elected to govern the City of Mountain View. They review and decide any appeals of DRC and Zoning Administrator decisions. They also make the final decision on all rezoning, precise plans, General Plan, planned unit development projects with four or more units and tentative maps, and review major projects and projects that are in planned districts.

DRC

How Does the DRC Review Process Work?

The DRC generally meets twice a month on Thursday afternoons (see City of Mountain View DRC Hearing Schedule). Applicants are required to submit a complete application prior being scheduled for a scheduled DRC meeting. Applicants are encouraged to schedule informal meetings with staff to obtain input and direction prior to submitting the complete application.

During those weeks before meetings, a Planner reviews the project for completeness, potential environmental impact, compliance with zoning, fit into the neighborhood and overall quality of the project. The other City departments also review the proposed project and send the Community Development Department their comments.

Applicants are required to attend the DRC meeting. The applicant should verify the date and agenda order for their items with the assigned Planner or the Community Development Department Secretary at (650) 903-6306 two days prior to a DRC meeting, since agendas are not mailed out prior to the meeting.

At the DRC meeting, the Committee discusses the project and then decides to either recommend approval, denial or continue it with recommendations for revisions.

If, after reviewing the application and visiting the property, Planning staff

determines that the proposal is very minor in scope and requires only an Administrative Development Review Permit, the project may be approved at staff level and will not be required to go to the DRC meeting.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

How Does the Review Process Work with the Zoning Administrator?

The Zoning Administrator holds public hearings twice a month on Wednesday afternoons (see City of Mountain View Zoning Administrator Hearing Schedule). Applicants are required to submit a complete application prior being scheduled for a scheduled Zoning Administrator Hearing. Owners of all properties within 300' of the proposed project site are notified and invited to attend the hearing.

As in the DRC review process, the Planning staff reviews the applications for completeness, potential environmental impacts, compliance with zoning, fit into the neighborhood and overall quality of the project. Other City departments also give comments and conditions.

The Zoning Administrator may also refer the application to the DRC for a review of the architectural and site plan aspects of the proposal. If it is referred to the DRC, it will be scheduled for a DRC meeting prior to the Zoning Administrator hearing.

What Happens at the Meetings and Public Hearings?

Applicants are required to attend the public hearings and describe the project. At the meeting, the DRC or Zoning Administrator hears testimony from any other people who wish to give comments.

On the basis of the staff review and the public testimony, the DRC or Zoning Administrator acts to either approve the project, deny it or continue it to allow the applicant to respond to the comments. The criteria for DRC and Zoning Administrator decisions are specified by State and City ordinance.

Written Findings Reports that contain the conditions of approval for the application are prepared and mailed to the applicant and the property owner, generally within two to three weeks of the meeting.

CEQA

What Is the State Law Regarding Evaluation of Environmental Impacts?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that the City conduct environmental review to determine whether a proposed project could have significant environmental impacts. Almost all single-family home additions and construction are exempt from this requirement. However, for a subdivision that includes construction of more than three homes, an Initial Study of Environmental Impact may be required. (See Community Development Department handouts

regarding CEQA review for information on this issue.)

REVIEW TIME

How Much Time Does the DRC and Zoning Administrator Review Process Take?

The Permit Streamlining Act stipulates that Planning staff has 30 days to determine if an application is complete. Incomplete applications will not be scheduled for a meeting until all required materials and fees are submitted.

If an application is complete and the project meets the criteria specified in the Zoning Ordinance, a project may be acted on at the first review meeting. In other cases, the applicant will need to make revisions to respond to comments and submit revised drawings or information for further review(s). Applicants are encouraged to meet with Planning staff prior to preparing complete detailed applications in order to get preliminary staff input.

DECISION

What if I Disagree with the Decision Made by DRC or the Zoning Administrator?

Any decision made by the DRC or the Zoning Administrator may be appealed to the City Council. There is an appeal period of 10 calendar days which starts from the date on the Findings Report. No building permits for the project may be issued until the appeal period has ended. Anyone, including a City Councilmember, may appeal the

decision. Appeals are filed at the City Clerk's Office, and there is a fee.

BUILDING PERMITS

Once the Community Development Department Approves the Project, When Can I Apply for a Building Permit?

Almost all projects reviewed by the Zoning Administrator and DRC require a building permit before any construction can begin. In order to apply for a building permit, an applicant must wait approximately two to three weeks to receive the written Findings Report approving the project. A building permit cannot be issued until the appeal period (10 calendar days from the date of the Findings Report) has ended.

THE REVIEW PROCESS FLOW CHART

The diagram which follows gives an overview of the review process and an approximation of the time involved in each step. Mountain View has a strong policy of public service excellence. In that spirit, the Community Development Department staff tries to inform applicants fully about City Codes and policies and to suggest positive approaches to project design to help speed the review process. The City sees this process not as just a set of regulations but as a constructive process that improves the visual appearance and property values throughout our community.

GRAPHICS/CDD
Zoning Hndbk-Single-FHomeowner-12-28-07^

PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS

